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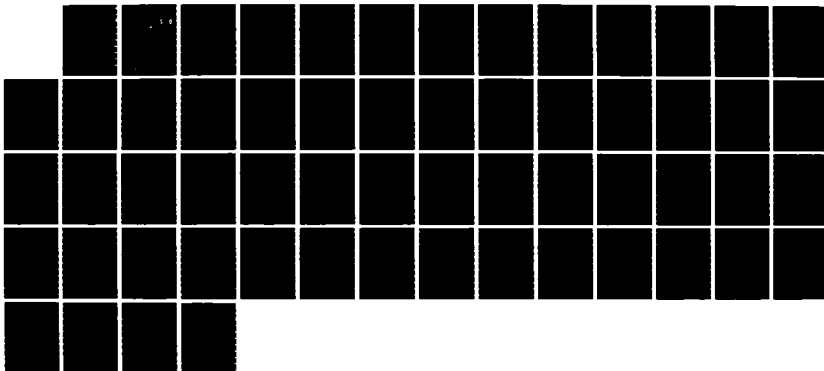
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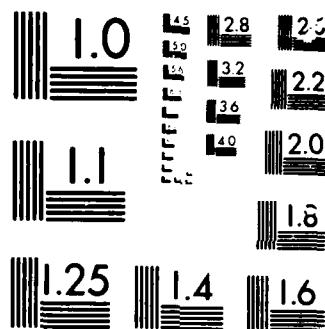
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AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

STUDENT REPORT

CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDE FOR
SERVICES OFFICERS

MAJOR DICK P. FLACK

86-0865

"insights into tomorrow"

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PREFACE

This guide consolidates many topics important for career planning into a single document which will be published as a handbook upon approval of HQ AFESC. This guide should not be viewed as the final word on career development because only official Air Force directives can provide such information. The guide is primarily designed for officers entering the services career field to help them build a career plan. Contained in this guide are highlights of key areas that address what's needed to plan a successful career and where to find detailed answers on this subject. The attempt is not to provide one plan for everyone but rather ideas to personalize a plan that's realistic and attainable to meet individual goals.

Special thanks in making this guide a reality go to a number of super people. My family's understanding and support were key in allowing me the time to complete this project. Captain John McClelland at MPC/PALACE BLUEPRINT was kind enough to put up with my many questions and to run down the information I needed. A thank you also goes to Lt Col Nate Pack at the Engineering and Services Center for sponsoring this project. And then there was the stabilizing force provided by Major Larry Turner. As my advisor, he took the time to improve the quality of this project and also kept it fun.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Dick P. Flack received his Bachelor of Science degree in Bakery Management and Science and his commission through AFROTC from Kansas State University in 1970. He entered on active duty in 1971 as the food service officer for the 3380 ABGp at Keesler AFB. In 1973 Major Flack was reassigned to Ramstein AB and the 86 CSGp where he was the food service officer and later the commissary officer. Returning to the states in 1976, Major Flack was assigned as the chief of services to the 433 ABGp at Altus AFB. During this time period he also attended SOS in-residence. In 1978 he moved to Lowry AFB and the 3440 TTG as a technical instructor for the services career field. Major Flack then attended Cornell University in 1981 where he received his masters in Hotel Administration as part of the Air Force Institute of Technology program. In 1983 he reported to the Air Force Commissary Service Headquarters, Kelly AFB, as chief of the subsistence division and subsequently became the executive officer to the commander. Major Flack was selected to attend the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell AFB in 1985 and upon graduation will assume the duty of detachment commander for the commissaries in the U.K.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

WHY A CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDE?

Career planning helps you control your own career through a plan of action. This guide will provide ideas to help further develop your abilities and desires into a meaningful career plan. It has been shown many times that the most common hindrances to career advancement are lack of effort and faulty planning. This guide is designed as a single reference document to complement various Air Force publications, your career manager at the Air Force Military Personnel Center (MPC), your boss, and your base personnel staff. Though all these sources should be used, they cannot make your decisions or plan your career. That's in your hands, and you, better than anyone, know your talents and interests.

WHAT'S IN YOUR FUTURE?

Are you a victim of "the hard work can do it all" philosophy? Yes, hard work is important, but it's only one means to a successful career. The Air Force takes a broader approach by using the "whole person" concept of career management, be it for job assignment, education and training selection, or promotion. The "whole person" assessments include performance, leadership, job responsibility, breadth of experience, professional competence, education (PME and academic), and specific achievements. The sum of these assessments measures your potential for advancement. Again, this guide will help you maximize your potential through a plan that will strengthen these assessments.

WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE?

The chapters to follow are a series of information centers to help formulate your career development plan.

Chapter Two describes the various services career field positions at different levels within the Air Force.

Chapter Three gives you an overview of the career field's demographics. It looks at authorizations by grade, organizational level, major command, and geographical locations.

Chapter Four highlights the educational opportunities available to you and how to acquire these experiences.

Chapter Five reviews some areas of career broadening outside the career field and how to go after those jobs.

Chapter Six studies the assignment process -- how it works, who are the key players, and how to make it work for you.

Chapter Seven describes the promotion process. It reviews a few important terms and provides some helpful hints on how to look your best for that next promotion board.

Chapter Eight ties it all together with some guidance in putting your career development plan on paper and thus into action.

SUMMARY

Your career is built on what you have done, are going to do and hope to do, so don't leave it to chance -- read on and plan your future.

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CHAPTER TWO

SERVICES (62XX) POSITIONS

Chapter Two

SERVICES (62XX) POSITIONS

INTRODUCTION

Many of the "whole person" assessments that measure your potential are tied in some fashion to the jobs you hold. This chapter will review the different positions within the services career field both at the base and major command levels plus some special duties. To maximize the "whole person" concept, plan your future jobs so they expand your job responsibility and breadth of experience. You should avoid channeling yourself into only one specialty and never refuse a challenge because you feel unqualified. These challenges help build a strong reputation, and good performance demonstrates your potential. The best time to acquire this responsibility is early in your career. There are numerous jobs that can provide you these opportunities.

BASE LEVEL SERVICES POSITIONS

The services career field positions are in food service, billeting, commissary, Army and Air Force Exchange Service, laundry and dry-cleaning, linen exchange, furnishings management, and mortuary affairs. The career field has nearly 450 authorizations at 140 worldwide locations to manage these jobs. The following abbreviated Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) descriptions are given to help plan your career. Also, some additional duties you hear about will be highlighted. Detailed job descriptions citing duties and responsibilities can be found in AFR 36-1.

Food Service Officer, AFSC 624X

Approximately 11% of the authorized positions are found in this specialty. The officer in this AFSC is responsible for managing food service activities such as dining halls, crash and alert facilities, flight kitchens, and wartime feeding operations. This is accomplished by determining personnel requirements and physical layout of facilities. This person also establishes performance standards and provides controls for accounting, storage, issue, and food preparation. Persons holding this position usually are in the grade of second lieutenant through captain with a few authorizations for majors.

Services Sales Officer, AFSC 623X

Approximately 8% of the authorized positions fall within this specialty. The officer in this AFSC primarily manages a commissary store. This person determines personnel and equipment requirements, physical layout, operating hours, and financial plans. This also includes directing personnel engaged in purchasing and merchandising tasks, plus managing the stock fund and operating budgets. Second lieutenants through captains typically hold this position.

Services Operations Officer, AFSC 622X

Approximately 43% of the authorized positions are in this specialty. The officer in this AFSC is responsible for operating and managing one or more services functions. He or she often serves as assistant to the services division chief or commander at large installations or as a division chief at smaller installations. Some officers may serve as billeting managers. Officers in the rank of second lieutenant through captain hold this position.

Services Staff Officer, AFSC 621X

Approximately 38% of authorized positions make up this specialty. The officer serving in this AFSC is responsible for formulating policy and managing services operations. This person oversees the total Services Program at the installation level to include the previous AFSCs mentioned except 623X. Additionally, at over 90 locations this individual functions as a squadron commander. The grades of individuals holding this position usually are major through colonel, though there are a few opportunities for a captain to hold this position.

Additional Duties

What about the hidden tasks of your job -- those additional duties? They are there and require your time. But as you accomplish these duties, you increase your job responsibilities and breadth of knowledge that complement your professional development (remember the "whole person" assessments). Many times these expose you to other functional areas, or give you direct access to the commander. Some examples of these additional responsibilities include: mobility/readiness officer, unit budget/resource advisor, unit briefer, mortuary officer, security officer, safety officer, vehicle control officer, self-inspection monitor, training officer, base exchange and commissary consumer advocate, and committee chairperson. Of course, there are always some of those recurring duties like Combined Federal Campaign chairperson and tax advisor. Take advantage of these additional duties and make them a positive part of your career development.

MAJOR COMMAND (MAJCOM) LEVEL SERVICES

Usually for each of the base level positions within the services division there is a functional counterpart at the major command. In each of these functional areas, you'll work with the bases, develop command guidance, and provide input to Air Force procedures and policies within your area of responsibility. Another important feature at this level is the organizational structure where services and engineering are in the same family. Because of this, job opportunities open up with the possibility of becoming the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Engineering and Services. Taking a step back from this job, you could hold other engineering related positions in the areas of housing and programming. Your career field is dynamic and ever changing. Stay abreast of what's happening with new job opportunities through your MAJCOM counterpart or career manager at MPC. The opportunity to serve in any of these positions is good because they draw from the ranks of lieutenant to colonel.

OTHER SPECIAL DUTIES WITHIN SERVICES

You can also put your talents to work other than at the base or major command level. You may want to think of these job opportunities as career broadening within the services career field. Typically, these positions are at a major command equivalent or higher. Again, these areas are on the move so keep up with the new opportunities by talking with your career manager at MPC.

Separate Operating Agency (SOA)

There are three SOAs that employ the services officer. The first is HQ Air Force Engineering and Services Center, HQ AFESC. The jobs usually mirror the functional areas found at the major commands except there are no military family housing positions. In these positions, you'll work a variety of projects and taskings that set Air Force policy and procedures. Positions are available in all grades from lieutenant to colonel with the ultimate possibility of becoming the Vice Commander of the Engineering and Services Center.

Another SOA is the Air Force Commissary Service, AFCONS. The base level job was described earlier in the chapter under Services Sales Officer position. After that, there are two other levels of job opportunities -- a region which oversees a number of commissaries, or the headquarters. Each of these levels expands your duty responsibilities from providing inputs to setting policy and procedures. Usually, individuals in the grade of captain to colonel fill the latter two levels which doesn't leave out the possibility of a services officer being the commander, a major general.

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) is the third SOA. The Services Sales Officer position depicts the typical duties. These responsibilities increase because the job opportunities are primarily at the regional commander and headquarters levels. These last two levels have captains to colonels filling them. A services officer could also serve as the commander or vice, major general or brigadier general respectively.

Office Secretary of Defense and Air Staff

There are also jobs for you in the Pentagon. These positions are staff action officers who have the responsibility to develop and coordinate major packages that set DOD or Air Force policy in the services arena. These positions can be held by a captain to colonel.

Technical Training Instructor

Instructor duty can provide you the opportunity to apply your services knowledge. For each of the base level positions there is a technical course of instruction requiring highly qualified officer instructors. This can give you the breadth and scope of experience particularly suitable for major command and higher follow-on assignments.

Joint Activities

Another way to broaden your expertise is to work with another service. Here you have opportunities in the readiness area to demonstrate and expand your planning skills. Most of this work deals with contingency programming and field training.

SUMMARY

This chapter gave you a quick snapshot of the different services positions and their degree of responsibility. Remember the "whole person" assessments and select your jobs to gain experience, broaden your knowledge, and increase your responsibility. This has a synergistic effect on your potential where the whole, as a result, becomes greater than the sum of its parts. The next chapter will give you a big picture of where the jobs are located.

CHAPTER THREE

62XX DEMOGRAPHICS

Chapter Three

62XX DEMOGRAPHICS

INTRODUCTION

After having examined the different positions which make up the career field, it's appropriate to look at how it's put together. As stated in the previous chapter, there are nearly 450 authorizations at 140 worldwide locations ranging in grades from second lieutenant to colonel. The career field also has over 20 short tour and over 100 long tour assignments with an approximate 2.5 to 1 CONUS to overseas assignment ratio. This chapter will break these numbers down and look at authorizations by grade, organizational level, command, country and state. An awareness and understanding of the career field's demographics are helpful in building realistic and attainable goals.

AUTHORIZATIONS

By Grade

The following table shows that over 60% of authorizations are in the company grades. (Responsibility comes early.)

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Authorizations</u>
Colonel	3%
Lt Colonel	16%
Major	20%
Captain	48%
Lieutenant	13%

Table 3-1. Grade Authorizations

Also, historically there has been a shortage of assigned field grade officers which has many officers usually working in a position one grade higher than their present rank. The challenges are there so don't shy away when offered one.

By Organizational Level

The following table gives you the big picture of opportunities at the base level and higher. You can readily see that the breadth of experience begins at the base level.

<u>Level</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
wing/base/sq.	72%
MAJCOM	12%
SOA/other	15%
joint/departmental	1%

Table 3-2. Organizational Distribution

By MAJCOM/SOA

After looking at the big picture, let's take it down to the specific commands and see who holds the lion's share of services positions. These will include base level through MAJCOM/SOA level jobs.

<u>MAJCOM/SOA</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
SAC	19%
USAFE	14%
TAC	12%
ATC	9%
MAC	9%
AFCOMS	9%
PACAF	7%
AFLC	4%
AFSC	4%
AAC	3%
AFESC	3%
AAFES	2%
AF ACADEMY	2%
SPACE	1%
AU	1%

Note: MAJCOM/SOA with less than 1% are not listed

Table 3-3. MAJCOM/SOA Authorizations

The grade authorizations within each MAJCOM/SOA were not shown because they are fairly evenly distributed among the commands. Table 3-3 does show, very quickly, that over 30% of the jobs are overseas when you look at USAFE, PACAF, AAC and some AFCOMS and AAFES positions. So, the opportunity of serving two or three overseas tours in your career are very good.

By Country

To plan for these overseas tours, table 3-4 gives the number of positions found in each country.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Positions</u>
Germany	40
United Kingdom	16
Japan	13
Korea	8
Philippines	7
Italy	7
Spain	5
Turkey	4
Guam	3
Netherlands	3
Greece	3
Belgium	2
Panama	2
Azores	1
Greenland	1
Saudi Arabia	1

Table 3-4. 62XX Authorizations by Country

The Palace Blueprint staff at MPC annually publishes the Engineering and Services Requirements for overseas short and long tours that are available the following year. This document should be helpful in developing your personal career plans.

By State

A continuation in the planning cycle is to look at where the jobs are within the 50 states. But don't get hung up on a location -- remember the "whole person" assessments. Because of space, only those states with more than 1% of the jobs are listed. You should visit your local personnel office and review the 62XX Officers Authorization List (OAL) for specific authorizations at any given location.

<u>State</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Texas	11%
Florida	7%
California	6%
Colorado	6%
Hawaii	3%
Nebraska	3%
Virginia	3%

The following states have 2%: Alaska, Arizona, Illinois, Louisiana, New Mexico, New York, South Carolina, and Washington.

The following states have 1%: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma. (also Washington D.C.)

Table 3-5. 62XX Authorizations by State

SUMMARY

This chapter looked at a lot of numbers to give you different snapshots of job locations. It reviewed authorizations by grade, organizational level, MAJCOM/SOA, country and finally by state. Having seen where the jobs are, it's appropriate to turn again to the "whole person" model in the next chapter to see how education and training fits into your career planning.

CHAPTER FOUR

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Chapter Four

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

In the fashion that jobs fulfill many of the "whole person" assessments, you'll also find education and training to be just as valuable. Education can help you reach your professional and career goals. This improved professional competence can lead to better performance when applied. What does this do for your potential? If planned and accomplished properly, you're on your way upward. This chapter will look at the specifics of your specialty training, professional military education (PME), education with industry (EWI), Air Staff Training (ASTRA), advanced academic degree, plus include a few words about professional organizations and publications. Besides reviewing these different programs, it will provide the information you'll need to pursue them.

YOUR SPECIALTY

One of the first objectives in becoming professionally competent is to have a strong technical background. Various courses offered at Lowry AFB, Colorado, have been designed to enhance your ability within your specialty. Selection to attend these courses is closely coordinated between your boss, the MAJCOM, and the services career manager at MPC. Here's a brief look at the different courses offered.

Services Staff Officer Course, G30AR6211001

This two week course builds on your previous services experience. The training includes executive management emphasizing readiness, resource management and interpretation of different management indicators.

Services Operations Officer Course, G30BR6221001

This is one of the primary courses for all officers entering the career field. In a short three weeks you cover all the different services operations. This prepares you to oversee each of the services branches.

Other Courses

Food Service Management, G30ZR6241002
Billeting Management, G30ZR6221000
Mortuary Affairs Officer, G30ZR6221001
Subsistence Operations Technician, G3AZR61271000

These courses are self-explanatory by their titles. Each is designed to cover the subject material necessary for you to fulfill your managerial duties in each area. A complete description and eligibility for these courses can be found in AFR 50-5, Chapter 3.

The AFIT School of Engineering at Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio, is now offering the following courses to services officers:

Engineering and Services Information Management System, WMGT 003
Base Civil Engineer, WMGT 400
Family Housing Management Applications, WMGT 406
Contract Preparation and Management, WMGT 425
Logistics Management, WMGT 435
Readiness Management, WMGT 438

Refer to AFR 50-5, Chapter 4, for details on course subject and attendance criteria.

PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

An additional educational path to becoming professionally competent is PME. There are three levels of Air Force PME: Squadron Officer School (SOS), Air Command and Staff College (ACSC), and Air War College (AWC). Each school is designed to broaden your perception and increase your knowledge to prepare you for higher levels of command and staff duties. Also, there are similar PME programs outside the Air Force like the Armed Forces Staff College, the National War College, and National Security Management Course.

Squadron Officer School

SOS is the first level of PME for the development of company grade officers. The objective of the school is to improve your ability to lead, follow, and communicate clearly and concisely. Additionally, the program is designed to provide you with a better understanding of the unique role of the commissioned officer as a professional. You can complete SOS either through a resident or correspondence program. Your education officer can provide the details for participation in either program.

Air Command and Staff College

ACSC is the Air Force's intermediate service school (ISS). The college focuses on broadening the midcareer officer's knowledge of the Air Force. The program helps to enhance your leadership and communication skills. Part of this is accomplished in the resident program by preparing a major research project. You can complete ACSC by attending the 10-month resident course or accomplishing either the correspondence or seminar programs. The curriculum for the nonresident programs covers: staff communications, command and management, military environment, and military employment. You should visit your local education office for details on enrolling in either nonresident program. Nomination for the resident course occurs when you are selected for major. Of those selected for major, approximately 20 percent are nominated to attend ISS. If nominated, you meet an annual USAF Central ISS Designation Board that determines when you'll attend the course. Again, it is recommended that you complete either of the nonresident programs as soon as you're eligible.

Air War College

The AWC is the senior service school (SSS) for the Air Force. The AWC curriculum looks at the application of aerospace power by analyzing current strategy and developing alternative future strategy. The nomination to attend the 10-month resident program occurs when you're selected for lieutenant colonel or colonel. Again, like ACSC, nominated officers meet selection boards to determine who attends the resident course. There is also a nonresident AWC program where you can complete the course material by seminar or correspondence. To enroll in either nonresident program, you should see your education officer.

A complete description of the three Air Force PME schools and eligibility for attendance can be found in AFR 53-8. If one or more of the above PME schools don't fit into your career plan, this same regulation details those PME programs offered outside the Air Force. The key is to complete three levels of PME during your career.

EDUCATION WITH INDUSTRY

A slight departure from Air Force technical training would be training with industry. This program is designed to have you work with industry for 10 months. You'll receive hands-on training while working within one of the participating hotel, retail or food industries at a predetermined location. The objective is to add a new dimension to your management technique that will enhance your future job experiences. Specific information on the EWI program

can be found in AFR 36-20, Chapter 8, and AFR 50-5, Chapter 4, in addition to talking with your MPC career manager.

AIR STAFF TRAINING PROGRAM

Another departure from the norm is spending a year learning first-hand, through a management intern program, how the air staff operates. The ASTRA program emphasizes active participation in complex HQ USAF decision making on current Air Staff projects. There is a short two-year eligibility window for the ASTRA program based on your Total Active Federal Commissioned Service Date (TAFCSO). For example, to be eligible for the CY 87 selection board you must have a TAFCSO of 1982 or 1983. So don't miss your eligibility period if you're interested in this program. See AFR 36-20, Chapter 8, and AFR 36-23, Chapter 2, for details.

ADVANCED ACADEMIC DEGREE

A finale to your educational opportunities should be obtaining a master's degree in the hospitality or business area. An advanced degree is important. Each year a number of services officers are selected to participate in the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) master's program. If selected, you'll have the opportunity to attend a university such as Cornell or Florida International. It's up to you to make the first step. You should notify your career manager at MPC by completing an AF Form 90 requesting an AFIT-sponsored master's program. Also, you should contact your local education officer to have AFIT certify your eligibility. Because timing is so critical, you need to take the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) even before requesting the AFIT Master's program. Your exam score is key to your acceptance into the program and a college. There may be a need to take the exam more than once, so plan ahead. Plus, the results are good for a few years. See AFR 36-20, Chapter 8, for application criteria. If the AFIT program doesn't work out for you, don't stop there. At most bases you can get into a local graduate program. Your base education officer can provide the details. The important thing is don't put it off.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/PUBLICATIONS

One more way of keeping the competitive edge is staying current with the latest technology within the services profession. One organization, the Air Force Services Society, keeps you abreast of the services business, and helps shape the future of the career field. There are also numerous publications such as the Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, Air Force Engineering and Services Quarterly, Exchange and Commissary News, and Progressive Grocer that review the latest developments within your specialties. You can get more information on these and other organizations and publications through your supervisor or MAJCOM counterpart.

SUMMARY

It's now up to you to pursue these educational opportunities to enhance your professional and career goals. When you stop learning because you feel there is nothing more to learn, you become stagnant. If you are to increase your worth to the Air Force, and maintain a sense of pride in your labors, then the training and education process is a must. To help you in this endeavor this chapter took a quick look at your specialty training, PME, EWI, ASTRA, master programs, and talked a little about professional organizations and publications. Now you're ready to review those jobs outside the career field that can broaden your career.

CHAPTER FIVE

CAREER BROADENING

Chapter Five

CAREER BROADENING

INTRODUCTION

Career broadening can occur within the services career field itself. Internal opportunities exist at a Technical Training Center, MAJCOM, SOA, Joint Staff, or HQ USAF level as described in Chapter Two. You should take full advantage of these positions. There are some broadening experiences outside the career field in support operations and education and training specialties that you might want to try. This chapter will highlight those opportunities available to you.

SELECTIVE CROSSFLOW

Some key officer specialties depend on a crossflow from other career fields. The jobs available include: Missile Operations, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC), Officer Training School (OTS), Basic Military Training School (BMTS), and Recruiting Service.

Missile Operations

This is a unique opportunity to gain operational experience. Most positions are for company grade officers filling combat crew positions at the squadron level. You also could fill wing positions such as scheduling officer, plans officer, or command post controller. Additionally, this job provides an excellent opportunity to complete your PME and advanced degree work. See AFR 36-1 and AFR 36-23, Chapter 10, for details.

Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps

The AFROTC instructor program gives you an excellent opportunity to teach and train Air Force cadets in military-related subjects at a college or university. Individuals filling these instructor positions are usually in the grade of captain to colonel. Your personal assignment preference to a particular school is dependent upon each school's instructor force having equal representation of the different Air Force skills and experiences. Review AFR 36-23, Chapter 8, for details on eligibility criteria and application requirements.

Officer Training School Instructor

Here you'll have the chance to perform in such duties as flight commander and career counselor. Instructor duty at OTS is usually in the grade of major or captain. Majors usually perform as squadron commanders or other staff positions while captains function in instructor positions. Eligibility specifics can be found in AFR 36-20, Chapter 8.

Basic Military Training School Position

As a captain or major you can be a squadron commander at the Basic Military Training School. You'll have the responsibility for the initial transition of 800-1000 recruits from civilian to enlisted military life. As in applying for OTS, eligibility for this position is found in AFR 36-20, Chapter 8.

Recruiting Service

Recruiting assignments can be from the squadron to headquarters level in such positions as commander, operations, resource management, publicity or OTS recruitment. Officers filling these positions are in the grade of lieutenant to colonel. Usually those in the higher staff positions such as headquarters have had recruiting field experience. Refer to AFR 36-20, Chapter 8, for eligibility criteria.

SUMMARY

This chapter gave you a good idea of what positions outside the services career field are usually available to broaden your experience in the Air Force. Not everyone can take advantage of these or will be selected for a special assignment. You're fortunate that the services career field is diverse enough giving you the opportunity to expand your experience level without leaving it. The key, though, is to broaden your career either within or outside the services career field. Now it's appropriate to go after that job you desire by looking at the assignment process in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX

ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

Chapter Six

ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Assignments are a very important part of your career development. You should seek those which expand your depth and breadth of experience and thereby provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate your potential. A considerable amount of mystery seems to surround the assignment process. The better you understand the system, though, the better you'll be able to make a significant input in getting the assignment you desire. This chapter will help you in this process by looking at the why, when, who, and how questions of the assignment cycle. It will also review how you can make your preference count.

ASSIGNMENT CYCLE

The assignment cycle as detailed in AFR 36-20 is a continuous process to meet Air Force requirements. It starts when there's a vacancy. The services career manager at MPC looks at who's available for reassignment, reviews his or her qualifications and compares these to the requirement. Once the best person for the position has been determined, the career manager usually contacts the officer and activities involved. This assignment cycle is complete once you are officially notified of the assignment. Having said this, it's appropriate to look at some questions usually asked about this process.

Why do you move?

As stated earlier, vacancies start the process. These usually occur when individuals return from overseas or when one separates from the Air Force. Some other areas generating requirements are officers selected for further professional (PME) or academic (AFIT) education, or those completing controlled tours.

When are you considered?

The nature of your current assignment determines when you'll be looked at for reassignment. The assignment folks use two terms to identify an officer's availability. The first is termed as mandatory availability, which means you must be moved after completing a specific tour such as one overseas, a Joint or Air Staff job, or an educational program. The second is considered normal

availability, which means you may be moved. Most officers in the CONUS fall into this uncontrolled category. The key factor in determining when "normal available" officers move is their time on station (TOS). With over 30 percent of the services jobs overseas and a good number of controlled assignments, it's not unlikely to average less than three years on station in the CONUS. You can possibly expect two long tours and one short tour overseas in your career. For an overseas assignment as a volunteer, you need only one year TOS. As a nonvolunteer for overseas, it's two years (one year for lieutenants) TOS. Generally speaking, if you have not been overseas, you should be selected over an officer of the same grade who already had an overseas tour. This is controlled by your overseas duty selection date (ODSD) and short tour return date (STRD). Know your return dates and make sure they're accurately reflected on your personnel records. If you haven't been overseas, the date you came on active duty will be used to determine your eligibility.

Who picks you and how?

Your PALACE BLUEPRINT services career manager at MPC makes the assignment. This individual looks at who's eligible by matching the "must move" or TOS criteria of each officer to the requirements: education, experience, and training. Your OERs play a big part in this selection process. That's why it's important they paint a clear picture. From this, the field is narrowed and the individual desire of each candidate as reflected on his or her officer career objective statement, AF Form 90, is considered. Another factor to this equation is how this move benefits an individual's career progression. In most cases, this is a matter of timing and there usually is no right path. Aside from this, your career manager works closely with the MAJCOMs and special activities in the selection process. This is done for a couple of reasons. First, the MAJCOM is more familiar with the requirement and qualifications needed. Second, they may want to fill the vacancy with an individual within the command. In fact, by-name requests can be made and will be taken into consideration during the assignment process. By using all these factors, the best person/job match can be made.

YOUR PREFERENCE

Now that you know how the assignment selection process works, make sure you have a say in the matter. You should make your career goals and assignment desires known. The AF Form 90, also sometimes referred to as a "dream sheet", is your primary device to make this input. The "dream sheet" will be exactly that, unless you determine your career objectives and balance them against your past experiences. If you do this, you can project what jobs, training and experiences will help you meet your long-range goals. Remember, timing is a critical ingredient in the assignment process, so be realistic in your planning. Don't go it alone; talk over your career plans with your career manager, boss, and other senior officers in your business. You now may be ready to put it all down on paper, but don't be in a hurry. In addition to using this handbook, the following documents and regulations can help ensure that your AF Form 90 realistically reflects your desires:

AFR 36-23, Officer Career Development.

This provides information on career progression steps within the services career field. These steps are a guide to develop a realistic career plan.

AFR 36-20, Officer Assignments.

This covers the complete assignment process to include how to apply for special duty or overseas assignments.

AFR 36-1, Officer Classifications.

This provides a description of and qualifications for each AFSC.

AFRP 36-1, Air Force Officer's Career Newsletter.

This highlights the latest changes to personnel policies and also provides information on special duty assignments.

Officer Authorization List (OAL).

This lists all authorizations, by location, for each AFSC worldwide. It also indicates the command, level of command (i.e., squadron or MAJCOM), education requirement, and a brief position title. The OAL is not a job vacancy shopping list. It's impractical to maintain a current list of vacancies. Your career manager has this vacancy information, and you can find the OAL at your CBPO Customer Service Center.

Engineering & Service Requirements List.

This is published annually, listing the long and short overseas tours and special positions that are available the following year. Your chief of services or MAJCOM should have a copy of this listing.

You should now have a good idea of how long you probably will remain in your present job. What's the possibility of going overseas versus a CONUS to CONUS move? Are you eligible for a training or graduate program? Armed with these answers you're ready to complete the AF Form 90.

The actual mechanics of filling out this form are covered in AFR 36-23. Your CBPO Customer Service Center also can provide the necessary guidance to complete this form. The important thing is to let your career manager know what you want to do. You're encouraged to use the remarks section of the form to explain why you mapped out the plan as you did. But don't stop here; continue to stay in close contact with your career manager at

HQ AFMPC/DPMRST3
Randolph AFB, TX 78150-6001

Autovon: 487-2768
Commercial: (512) 652-2768

SUMMARY

This chapter gave you a quick overview of the assignment process. Specifically, it looked at the why, when, who, and how questions of the assignment selection process. Probably most important, it reviewed how you can make your preferences known using the AF Form 90. This document is more than a "dream sheet." It can be a realistic road map to your career's future if you put some thought into it. But even though this chapter talked about that next assignment, remember it's heavily dependent on how well you perform in your present position. One of the best career development jobs you can have is the one you're in right now, so it's important to do it right. The results of your successful assignments and demonstrated potential can be realized in your future promotions, the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PROMOTION PROCESS

Chapter Seven

PROMOTION PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Promotion and career development go hand in hand because both say something about your future. Your promotion is not a reward for past accomplishments but an advancement based on your potential to assume greater responsibility. This chapter will highlight the promotion system and what you can do to enhance your promotability.

PROMOTION SYSTEM

The officer promotion system has two fundamental purposes: first, to provide a fair and competitive process to advance the best qualified officers; and second, to provide a career incentive to attract and maintain a quality officer force. To summarize how this is done, it's important to understand some key facts of advancement like how and when you're considered, and what are your opportunities for promotion. Complete details about the promotion process can be obtained from AFR 36-10, AFR 36-89, and your CBPO.

Promotion Zones

Below-the-promotion zone (BPZ) is your opportunity for promotion ahead of your contemporaries when you're eligible for consideration in each of the rank categories. Each MAJCOM headquarters conducts a nomination board to review the records of all BPZ officers. Officers assigned to HQ USAF or a SOA meet a HQ USAF nomination board. These boards nominate a limited number of officers who are then considered with eligible officers in-the-promotion zone (IPZ) when the Central Selection Board meets at AFMPC.

In-the-promotion zone is your best chance or highest percentage opportunity to be promoted. This puts you senior to officers being considered BPZ and junior to those considered above-the-promotion zone (APZ).

Above-the-promotion zone is your opportunity to be considered again by subsequent promotion boards, if you're not selected IPZ. But your percentage opportunity for promotion decreases considerably with each board.

Promotion Consideration

It's important to know when you're considered for promotion. This enables you to effectively plan your career to meet the milestones which demonstrate your potential for advancement. The following table summarizes when you're usually considered for each promotion:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>IPZ Consideration</u>	<u>BPZ Consideration</u>
1st Lt	2 years	----
Captain	4 years	----
Major	11 years	3 yrs before IPZ
Lt Col	15 years	2 yrs before IPZ
Colonel	20 years	2 yrs before IPZ

Table 7-1. Promotion Consideration

These figures could vary, depending on the size of your year group and the number of vacancies. To be considered in-the-promotion zone for major through colonel, you must have completed three years in grade as a captain, major or lieutenant colonel respectively. Your CBPO sends out a preselection brief 90 to 120 days before the promotion board convenes to alert you of your promotion consideration. This gives you the opportunity to check the accuracy of your personnel records.

Promotion Opportunity

<u>Grade</u>	<u>IPZ Opportunity</u>	<u>BPZ Opportunity</u>
1st Lt	100% (Fully Qualified)	----
Captain	95%	----
Major	90%	5.0%
Lt Col	75%	7.5%
Colonel	55%	5.0%

Table 7-2. Promotion Opportunity

The IPZ percentages are a little misleading. The actual selection rate compared to the opportunity rate for any one promotion board is lower because the BPZ and APZ promotions are made at the expense of IPZ quotas.

PROMOTION PREPARATION

You control three key areas that can have a big impact on your future advancements. First, demonstrate your potential through your job performance.

Second, maintain an accurate personnel record because it's all the promotion board members see. Finally, talk to your superiors to learn from their experiences and to avoid making any critical mistakes.

Promotion Criteria

Your selection for promotion is based on your potential to serve in positions of greater responsibility. This assessment of your potential is made by applying the criteria of the "whole person" concept. These assessments and their evaluation include:

<u>Assessments</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>
Performance	OERs and Training Reports
Leadership	Command and Staff Positions
Breadth of Experience	Where/What/When
Job Responsibility	Scope/Exposure
Professional Competence	Expertise of Specialist
Education	Level/PME/Utilization
Specific Achievement	Awards/Decorations

Table 7-3. Promotion Criteria

No one factor is considered by the Air Force to carry more weight than another. Board members, however, generally seem to agree that job performance, as documented in OERs, is the most important. Having an OER well documented and written in plain English with no "services" jargon allows a promotion board member to quickly assess your potential. If you take a careful look at your OER, you'll see almost every factor contained in Table 7-3 is described or evaluated on this form.

Promotion Folder

Your selection folder is all that a board member will know about you so make sure it presents a good image. Your next promotion will be riding on its content. This folder should contain the following up-to-date documents:

- OERs and training reports,
- photograph,
- officer selection brief (contains a history of your assignments, education, OER ratings, and decorations),
- citations for decorations, and
- AF Form 11, officer military record, if you served prior to April 1974.

Additionally, your selection folder may contain one or more of the following documents depending on your personal situation:

- a letter you have written to the promotion board president,
- a declination letter if you turn down a PME selection, and
- letters and forms concerning recommendation for non-selection, courts-martial, and nonjudicial punishment.

If you have any derogatory information like this in your folder, you'll be notified through your CBPO before the promotion board meets. It can't be overemphasized, though, the importance of knowing what's in your personnel record and that it's accurate. You can accomplish this in one of three ways:

- check your records at your CBPO,
- review a microfiche of your records obtainable from MPC. Request this through HQAFMPC/DPMDOM5D, Attn: Review by Mail Program, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-6001. Give your name, grade, SSAN and return address. You should also indicate if you want your complete master record or just your selection record, or
- review your records at Randolph AFB, building 499B, room 127. Call ahead to have your records ready upon your arrival (AUTOVON 487-2998).

Don't let errors go uncorrected; have your CBPO make the correction. Remember to follow up because you're responsible for the accuracy of your personnel record.

Things To Avoid

Make sure you haven't fallen into any of the following traps:

- no upward mobility (i.e., base, MAJCOM, Joint Service, Air Staff),
- no PME (if you're eligible, start and complete it),
- no advance degree (if you've completed 15 hours towards your masters, have your records reflect a BA+),
- no up-to-date photograph,
- no variety of jobs, or
- failure to maintain an accurate personnel record (i.e., PME missing, master degree not reflected).

You have direct control over a majority of these items so take corrective action where necessary. Also take some time to talk with your superiors to

gain their ideas for success. They have been there, so take advantage of their experiences and consider making their suggestions part of your career development plan.

SUMMARY

The promotion process discussed here looked at when you'll be considered for promotion and what opportunities you'll have for advancement. Most important, the chapter highlighted some suggestions you can use to better your chances for that next promotion. Don't stop yet. The last chapter will put it all together into a plan of action, your career development plan.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

“ORGANIZING YOUR FUTURE”

Chapter Eight

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

"ORGANIZING YOUR FUTURE"

INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters examined various aspects of career development, and now it's time to tie them all together. As stated in Chapter One, you, better than anyone, know your talents and interests. Combine this with the information contained in this pamphlet and you're ready to develop your career plan. To assist you in this final step, this chapter will review some career planning factors, highlight a few career progression milestones, and summarize some career planning references. But as you develop your career plan, be flexible because different paths can lead to the same objective. Again, the attempt here is not to provide "the plan" but rather to give you some ideas to personalize your plan so it's realistic and attainable.

CAREER PLANNING FACTORS

As you begin to draft your career plan, remember the "whole person" assessments and how they figure into the management of your career. By comparing your past accomplishments to your goals, you're ready to plan for the future. Some key planning factors to remember are performance, PME, education, and experience.

Performance

A key element in measuring your potential for career advancement is your duty performance that's well documented and written in your OER. At the same time, an essential ingredient of your performance is leadership. Seek those challenging jobs that provide greater responsibility where you can demonstrate your leadership and accomplish specific achievements.

PME

PME is another important factor in your personal development. It takes you beyond your job and provides additional knowledge of military operations on national and international issues. The three schools described in Chapter Four

are a must. Plan to complete them. The worse thing is to put them off and then scramble at the last minute before the next promotion board.

Education

First, know your specialty by completing the various technical courses offered. Second, obtain your masters degree either on your own or through the AFIT program. Additionally, continue to sharpen your skills by participating in an EWI program or other professional organizations. It's important to know your obligation in these various programs so they fit your overall career plan.

Experience

Varied assignments enhance your opportunities for increased job responsibility and job diversity. These different experiences expand your knowledge to handle duties of increasing scope, all adding to your potential. One of the best ways of preparing for that next key assignment is to perform superbly in your present job.

CAREER PROGRESSION MILESTONES

There is no one career plan for every officer to follow, but here are some common benchmarks. The following can serve as a career pattern for you to increase your potential for advancement. For some, the opportunities and challenges shown in each grouping may come earlier, later or never. The key is for you to develop your own career plan that is tailored around your own ideas and opportunities.

First Four Years

- Attend the appropriate services officer courses.
- Get to know your job; rotate jobs within your services organization to learn the different services positions and become fully qualified within your specialty.
- Complete Squadron Officer School if you have two or more years total active federal commissioned service.
- Consider an overseas assignment, either a short or long tour.

Fifth Through Seventh Year

- Seek an advanced degree through AFIT graduate education or an on-base program in a business-related area or hotel/restaurant management program.

- Attend an EWI assignment if your masters is completed.
- Consider an assignment to the services training school as an instructor.
- Seek an assignment as a services squadron commander or chief of services at a small base either stateside or overseas.

Eighth Through Eleventh Year

- Seek an assignment as a staff officer: major command, Inspector General Duty, AFESC, AFCOMS, AAFES, or Air Staff.
- Consider an assignment as a services squadron commander at a small base (if you haven't had an overseas assignment yet, do so now or it'll come later when the timing may not be the best).

Twelfth Through Fifteenth Year

- Command a large services squadron (consider that second overseas assignment).
- Seek an assignment as a field grade staff officer: major command, Air Force Inspector General, AFESC, AFCOMS, AAFES, Air Staff, or Joint/Departmental activities.
- Complete Air Command and Staff College.

Sixteenth Through Twentieth Year

- Command a large services squadron.
- Seek a position as division chief or director at a major command, AFESC, AFCOMS, AAFES, or as a deputy base commander.
- Complete Air War College.

After Twenty Years

- Seek a position as MAJCOM Director of Housing and Services, AFCOMS Region Commander, AFESC Deputy Commander, base commander, or MAJCOM Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Engineering and Services.

CAREER PLANNING REFERENCES

Some suggestions have been provided to construct your personalized career development plan, but to fill in the blanks, it may be necessary to consult some additional sources. First, don't hesitate to discuss your aspirations

with your boss so he or she can help you attain your career objectives. Second, observe the career successes of senior officers in the business. Talk to these individuals to gain their perception on how to build a successful career progression. Also, review your plan with the MPC services career manager both verbally and in writing through your AF Form 90. Finally, the following list of publications can be helpful to answer those detailed questions when you're ready to put your plan to paper:

AFR 36-1	Officer Classification
AFR 36-5	Appointment of Officers in the Regular Air Force
AFR 36-10	Officer Evaluations
AFR 36-20	Officer Assignments
AFR 36-23	Officer Career Development
AFR 36-51	Active Duty Service Commitments
AFR 36-89	Promotion of Active Duty List Officers
AFR 50-5	USAF Formal School Catalog
AFR 50-12	Extension Course Program
AFR 53-8	USAF Officer Professional Military Education System
AFR 53-11	Air Force Institute of Technology

SUMMARY

A successful career just doesn't happen. You must initiate a realistic plan, periodically review and revise it as your goals change, and then actively pursue this plan. This chapter emphasized the importance of your career plan to strengthen the "whole person" assessments which measure your potential for advancement. Also, some key career milestones were highlighted. But remember, there isn't a universal career plan that fits all officers. Discuss your plan with those who have been successful and seek their advice. It isn't a crime to emulate a success story. The important thing is to build a career plan and put it into action to guide a successful career.

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GLOSSARY

AAC	Alaskan Air Command
AAFES	Army and Air Force Exchange Service
ACSC	Air Command and Staff College
AFCOMS	Air Force Commissary Service
AFESC	Air Force Engineering and Services Center
AFIT	Air Force Institute of Technology
AFLC	Air Force Logistics Command
AFMPC	Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center
AFROTC	Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps
AFSC	Air Force Specialty Code
APZ	Above-the-Promotion Zone
ATC	Air Training Command
AWC	Air War College
ASTRA	Air Staff Training Program
AU	Air University
BMTS	Base Military Training School
BPZ	Below-the-Promotion Zone
CBPO	Consolidated Base Personnel Office
CONUS	Continental United States
DOD	Department of Defense
EWI	Education With Industry
IPZ	In-the-Promotion Zone
ISS	Intermediate Service School
MAC	Military Airlift Command
MAJCOM	Major Command
OAL	Officer Authorization List
ODSD	Overseas Duty Selection Date
OSD	Office Secretary of Defense
OER	Officer Effectiveness Report
OTS	Officer Training School
PACAF	Pacific Air Force
PME	Professional Military Education
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SOA	Separate Operating Agency
SOS	Squadron Officer School
SSS	Senior Service School
STRD	Short Tour Return Date
TAC	Tactical Air Command
TAFCSD	Total Active Federal Commissioned Service Date
TOS	Time on Station
USAF	United States Air Force
USAFE	U.S. Air Forces Europe

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